



Division of Mental
Health and Addiction

Freedom Self-Advocacy Curriculum

Self-advocacy means working by oneself, or with someone's help, to get what is needed. The Freedom Self-Advocacy Curriculum is a tool to help teach self-advocacy skills to mental health consumers.

Purpose: The National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse, working in conjunction with the National Mental Health Association (NMHA), the National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (NAPAS), and other organizations, has developed the Freedom Self-Advocacy Curriculum. The original curriculum can be found on the Clearinghouse web site at http://www.mhselfhelp.org/training/view.php?training_id=7 The Division of Mental Health and Addiction's Office of Consumer and Family Affairs has adapted this curriculum into training presentations and handouts to meet the needs of consumers in our state. We can come to any location in Indiana to present the self-advocacy training. There is no cost for this training. A minimum of three hours is needed to cover the curriculum.

Scope of Need: The Final Report of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/>) reinforced the goal of consumer-directed community integration as the key component of a strategy to fundamentally transform the delivery of mental health services in the United States. The goals and recommendations outlined by the Commission provide a framework for States and Territories to set priorities for new policies, programs, and practices and to eliminate unnecessary institutionalization. "The Commission is convinced of the need to increase opportunities for consumers and family members to share their knowledge, skills, and experiences of recovery."¹

Overview of the Freedom Self-Advocacy Curriculum: Workshop one "Attitudes" teaches how to keep feelings from getting in the way of what you need. Workshop two "Skills" teaches planning and communication skills that will help you to get people to listen. Workshop three "Knowledge" will increase your knowledge of the mental health system and to learn resources to turn to when things are not working.

"Attitudes" Workshop One	"Skills" Workshop Two	"Knowledge" Workshop Three
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How we react when we face obstacles• Common responses to obstacles• Constructive responses when facing obstacles• Analyze advocacy strengths and weaknesses.• Learn how to advocate "in person"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn to analyze a problem, develop a solution, and communicate more effectively• Tackle a common obstacle together to come to a solution• Sharpen verbal communication skills• Talk about skills we've learned to apply in our lives• Learn advocacy "on the phone"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find out about your rights• Discuss resources in the local community and government agencies that make decisions that affect you• Where to find information useful in facing an obstacle• Learn to write a letter to a person in charge asking them to address a situation• Learn basics of advocating "in writing"

Contact Information: Bruce VanDusen, Bureau Chief, DMHA
317-232-7912
BruceVanDusen@fssa.in.gov

1-19-07

¹ President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. (2003). Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America.